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SUBJECT: EUFOR - POISE AND PROMISE IN CHAD'S TROUBLED EAST

REF: NDJAMENA 382

Classified By: CDA RGribbin for reasons 1.4 b&d

11. (C) Summary. The European Peace Keeping Force (EUFOR) in eastern Chad is operational and robust. Well equipped with APCs, tracked vehicles and helicopters, but even resorting to horses during the rains, EUFOR patrols circulate regularly throughout the operational zone. Troops assure security by their presence and by contact and communication with governmental authorities, international humanitarian personnel, camp populations and local communities. Because this is the first "raiding" season with EUFOR present, it is too early to assess the overall impact of the peace keepers, especially regarding international hopes that IDPs might return home. However, EUFOR activities in Chad notwithstanding, both refugees and IDPs forcefully stated that insecurity in eastern Chad remains a function of insecurity in Darfur. end Summary.

12. (C) Charge Gribbin joined a group of 20 diplomats and senior Chadian officials for a French EU presidency sponsored trip to observe, learn about and evaluate the European peace keeping force in eastern Chad. The group visited headquarters in Abeche and forward battalion commands in Farachana and Goz Beida. Along the way we met with regional governors, international humanitarian personnel, refugee and IDP camp residents.

13. (C) At the end of the rainy season eastern Chad is covered with light green pasture and thousands of acres of millet, sorghum, peanuts and other crops nearing harvest. In the area visited the harvest will be good. In the southern reaches of the EUFOR zone, the wadis are drying up so that more regular land movements can re-commence. Yet the southern sector commander assured us (with photos of an APC sunk in a river up to its top hatches) that patrolling had continued during the rains. The central sector commander advised that he had even rented some horses to patrol during flooded times.

14. (C) Logistically EUFOR has accomplished miracles during its short seven month life span. Swatches of barren ground now hum with life - tent and prefab structures abound, electricity, water, mess halls and even internet are available. Battalions are fully equipped with the trucks, jeeps, tractors and heavier armed equipment needed for the job. MINURCAT personnel are co-locating with EUFOR.

15. (C) Operationally, EUFOR understands its mission - patrol, protect, observe, assure and communicate. This was clearly evident in the description of activities undertaken in the center and southern sectors visited. EUFOR escorts some humanitarian convoys. Troops patrol out and bivouac on their own. Soldiers meet regularly with central government and local officials as well as international organization personnel. Clearly, the mere presence of such a force has a dissuasive impact on those who sow insecurity. Yet, all EUFOR's interlocutors want EUFOR to be more than it is. International personnel want better protection against theft and car hijacking, plus punishment of perpetrators. Local officials want more development projects. Refugees and IDPs want absolute security on a static basis. Nonetheless, relations among these groups remain viable. There appeared to be much less contact and understanding between EUFOR and the Chadian Army (ANT) and even resentment by the latter of EUFOR's presence and its obviously superior equipment. But there too, there has been little friction as the two forces largely ignore each other. We only saw several ANT pick-ups in Goz Beida.

16. (C) At the battalion level and below - especially in the central zone - some of the platitudes of not taking sides in Chad's internal struggle dissipated. The commander assured us that his forces have the necessary rules of engagement so as to protect themselves from all comers and to take action themselves against any Jajaweed or others who threaten the camps, the displaced, the crossroads and towns that he must control to assure his mission. Back at headquarters EUFOR intelligence personnel carefully track rebel movements, much via daily mirage reconnaissance flights, or by signal

intelligence. Additionally, EUFOR radar fully covers the frontier zones.

17. (C) MINURCAT. An expanded MINURCAT presence was evident throughout. Human rights monitors and civil affairs personnel are assigned. DIS police buildings are being constructed and international police personnel, including women officers, were present in the camps. Dr. Mahamat, the CONAFIT chief who accompanied the group, advised that the deployment of Chadian DIS police personnel to the east would begin on October 15.

18. (C) The touring group of diplomats visited the refugee camp of Djabal and IDP camp of Gouroukoun, both outside Goz

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Beida. Both camps are extensive villages of family compounds rather than long rows of blue UN tarpaulin shelters. In existence now for several years, life has taken on a regular pace. Water systems run, schools educate, the clinics are full, but not with life threatening maladie due to malnutrition or terrible sanitation conditions. In town meetings with camp residents, the only camp related issue was a request for more food from the IDPs. Otherwise presentations focused on insecurity in Darfur and the need to take corrective measures there so that peace could be achieved in Chad as well. IDPs were adamant that they would not return home to stay - although young men were sent to plant and harvest - until they felt safe from Jajaweed raiders. They had little hope that even a robust EUFOR presence along the frontier would be effective unless there was a solution in Darfur. Sudanese refugees were even more strident that the international community must do more to halt genocide, rape and conflict that caused them to flee and which continually afflicts family members who stayed in Darfur. I assured the refugees that the US and international community understood their plight, were strengthening UNAMID and committed to pushing political solutions forward. I said this would not be a quick process, but meanwhile they were safe in Chad (cheers). The Libyan ambassador remonstrated that Darfur was an African problem and that international community ought to keep its hands off (boos). Order could not be restored and the session broke up.

19. (C) Comment: EUFOR is an impressive operation. It is just what a PKO ought to be. It has the will, the mandate and the ability to do the job its been given. It has cost about 100 million Euro so far. Obviously EUFOR does not solve all the problems - and being mostly all white (and French) it does cast a neocolonialist shadow, but it is only a Band-Aid, a year long transition to the yet-to-be fleshed out UN PKO. Certainly, part of the French reason for asking P-5 diplomats along was to show us what can be, once blue hats go on. When that happens, we assume and hope that along with the operational experience, plus some continuation by French, Irish and Polish contingents, that the basic camp infrastructure developed by EUFOR would convey.

GRIBBIN